

This facility is a wonderful tribute to America's veterans, and a valuable asset for the people of northeastern South Dakota. Congratulations, Aberdeen, on another job well done.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to express my congratulations and warm wishes to Bjorn Selinder as he retires from his position as Churchill County Manager in the State of Nevada.

Bjorn, affectionately known as "BJ", has led a selfless life as a public servant, friend, husband and father. Born in Goteborg, Sweden, Bjorn, his brother and his parents immigrated to the United States in the early 1950s and moved to Minneapolis, MN.

After Bjorn graduated from Southwest High School, he ended up in California where he met the love of his life, Judy Moffatt. Soon after he met her, they married in 1996 and later moved to Nevada in 1973 to raise their children and start a family business.

Bjorn originally went to Churchill County looking for a short-term job. Twenty-seven years later, he is one of the longest serving county managers in the State of Nevada.

When he first joined Churchill County in August of 1974, his duties were coordination and planning activities and acting as assistant to the county manager. A short 2 years later, BJ became the Churchill County manager.

Prior to moving to Fallon, Nevada, Bjorn received his bachelors degree in management science from Sierra Nevada College and did post graduate work at the University of Nevada Reno.

He worked in the aerospace and ordnance industries when he lived in southern California and Minneapolis. He also came to Churchill County with an understanding about how to run a small business.

Throughout Bjorn's life as a public servant, his wife Judy has been the rock on which he leans. With the road of retirement stretching before them, they plan to spend time with their three grandchildren and their two daughters, Kristen and Majken. I am sure BJ will also put in a few hours on the lovely Fallon golf course.

Bjorn Selinder is leaving his job, but he's not leaving the community. As he goes about his new life, I hope he will take time every day to look around at the county he helped create, and know that his work is appreciated.

I congratulate Bjorn on a job well done and wish him an enjoyable retirement.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I ask that the following information be entered into the RECORD. I was unavoidably absent for rollcall votes on Thursday, October 30, 2003 as I was attending a funeral in Omaha, NE. As a result, I would ask that the RECORD reflect the following:

On vote No. 419, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 420, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 421, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 422, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 423, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 424, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 425, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 426, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 427, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 428, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 429, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 430, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 431, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

On vote No. 432, if present and voting, the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) would have voted "yea."

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

In pronouncing sentence on 21-year-old Yitzak Abba Marta, Circuit Judge William Storey told the court, "this was nothing more than a hate crime . . . this person was killed because he was gay." Marta was convicted for the 1996 beating and strangling death of Alan Fitzgerald Walker, a transvestite. Marta and an accomplice picked up Walker outside of a gay nightclub while he was dressed as a woman. Police were called to Walker's home 3 days later when neighbors became suspicious of his disappearance. Not only had he been absent, but the tires on his car had been slashed, and there were notes on his door. Police found Walker's body in his bedroom with "KKK" scrawled in blood on an adjacent wall.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing

current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

UNIVERSAL SERVICE

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing last week on the Universal Service Fund, USF, and I would like to take a few moments to share with my colleagues some thoughts on this topic. As many of my colleagues know, the survival and strength of this fund is critically important to providing affordable, state-of-the-art telecommunications services to rural and high-cost areas. Without universal service support, many residents in South Dakota and other rural areas would not have the opportunity to share in the benefits of quality telephone and data services.

I have recently cosponsored S. 1380, the Rural Universal Service Equity Act of 2003, which would change the formulas that determine the distribution of universal service high-cost funds among nonrural telephone companies. I believe this legislation is necessary to address an inequity in the current formulas limiting the amount of high-cost support so called nonrural companies such as Qwest receive from the USF. While I am pleased that under this legislation, South Dakota would receive more support than it currently does, I am mindful that it does so at the expense of other States and Puerto Rico.

Under the current USF system, although Qwest provides telephone service to many South Dakota residents, including some in very rural and high cost areas, it receives no universal service support from the high-cost model for operations in South Dakota. This has the practical effect of forcing Qwest to keep rates in other areas of my State higher than they otherwise would be in order to subsidize service in the high cost areas.

Although I support this legislation, I recognize that it does not address the more fundamental issues threatening the sustainability of the universal service fund. The entire universal service system is jeopardized because of a shrinking contribution base and increased demands. Without addressing these fundamental problems related to the viability of the system as a whole, the change in the formulas as proposed in S. 1380 will have limited value.

I urge my colleagues to work in a bipartisan manner to help assess and develop comprehensive solutions to the many outstanding and emerging issues that confront the universal service program. We can do no less if we truly believe in the underlying principles of this longtime national policy that has proven so vital to both our economic and national security.